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TAGS: KMDR KPAO OIIP OPRC PGOV PREL PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: TERRORISM/MILITARY, KERRY-LUGAR BILL, POLITICAL, ECON/BUSINESS, MISCELLANEOUS - OCTOBER 21, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of the twin suicide bombings at the International Islamic University in Islamabad killing six persons dominated front pages on Wednesday. The government's decision to close down all the educational institutions across the country in the wake of terror attack received extensive coverage. Several major dailies ran the U.S. Embassy's statement "condemning" the incident. The prestigious English language daily, "Dawn," called the incident as "dastardly attack against innocent students."

Reports that the Taliban offered "stiff resistance" to the advancing troops in South Waziristan received prominent display. Along with this news, some dailies had on their front page reports that the Pakistan Army "struck deal with Taliban factions" to keep them from joining the battle against the government. The demand by top Pakistani military leadership urging NATO to "seal Afghan border as Pak Army mounted a massive offensive against Taliban in the lawless northwest region" was also highlighted. Newspapers reported Defense Secretary Gates' statement describing the military operation in Waziristan as "encouraging." Commenting on the subject, the Lahore-based liberal English daily, "Daily Times," called it "the second crucial step" after Swat to "re-establish the dwindling writ of the state." End Summary.

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: "Desperadoes Attack University In Islamabad; Three Girls Among Six Killed" "Dawn" (10/21)

"Three girls were among six people killed on Tuesday in twin suicide attacks inside the International Islamic University, Islamabad. Two blocks were severely damaged."

News Story: "Schools And Colleges Closed Nationwide" "Dawn" (10/21)

"All government and private schools in the four provinces will remain closed from Wednesday - in Punjab till further orders and in other provinces for the remaining days of the week."

News Story: "U.S. Embassy Condemns IIUI Blasts" "The Nation" (10/21)

"The United States Embassy in Islamabad has condemned suicide attacks in International Islamic University, Islamabad that claimed innocent lives on Tuesday." (Story also covered in: Jang, Express)

News Story: "Troops Face Stiff Resistance In South Waziristan"
"Dawn" (10/21)

"Troops and militants were locked in fierce clashes in several Mehsud areas of South Waziristan on Tuesday and the army said that 12 Taliban fighters had been killed since Monday night. Four security personnel lost their lives."

News Story: "Army Cuts Deal With Taliban Factions" "Daily Times"
(10/21)

"The army, in the midst of an operation in South Waziristan, has struck deals to keep two powerful, anti-U.S. tribal chiefs from joining the battle against the government, officials have said. Under the terms agreed to about three weeks ago, Taliban renegades Maulvi Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur would stay out of the parts of South Waziristan controlled by the TTP."

News Story: "Pakistan Urges NATO To Seal Afghan Border" "Dawn"
(10/21)

"Pakistan on Tuesday urged NATO troops stationed in Afghanistan to share intelligence and seal the border as it mounts a massive offensive against Taliban militants in the lawless northwest.... Pakistan Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Chairman General Tariq Majid made Tuesday's call during talks with Britain's armed forces chief Jock Stirrup, a military statement said."

News Story: "U.S. Encouraged By South Waziristan Offensive: Gates"
"Daily Times" (10/21)

"U.S. Secretary of State Robert Gates on Tuesday said he was encouraged by the Pakistani offensive against Taliban but that it was too soon to judge the outcome."

News Story: "Pakistan Is At War: Malik" "Daily Times" (10/21)

"Pakistan is currently in a state of war and terrorists want to destabilize the country with their attacks, Interior Minister Rehman Malik said on Tuesday. He told media that the blasts were linked to the military operation in South Waziristan."

News Story: "Ghani Seeks Mehsud Elders' support" "Dawn" (10/21)

"NWFP Governor Owais Ahmad Ghani met elders of the Mehsud tribe in Tank on Tuesday and sought their support for army's operation against militants in South Waziristan."

News Story: "Battle For Kotkai Intensifies As 20 Taliban Killed"
"Daily Times" (10/21)

"The army killed 20 Taliban on the fourth day of Operation Rah-e-Nijat against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan in South Waziristan, the military said on Tuesday, as troops intensified the battle for control of Kotkai."

News Story: "170,000 People Displaced By SWA Operation So Far: UN"
"The News" (10/21)

"The United Nations said on Monday that 170,000 people had been displaced from the troubled South Waziristan Agency due to fresh violence and the military operation by the Pakistan Army against the militants and estimated that the number of IDPs would reach 250,000 in the next couple of days."

News Story: "Forces Kill Four Militants In Khyber Agency" "Dawn"
(10/21)

"Security forces killed three militants and injured four others besides seizing huge quantity of arms and ammunition during an operation in Bara tehsil of Khyber Agency on Tuesday."

News Story: "U.S. Responsible For Terror In Region: FM" "The Nation"
(10/21)

"Holding Americans responsible for the emergence of terrorism in the region, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi maintained on Tuesday

it was a 30-year-old menace that surfaced when the U.S. suddenly quit this region after disintegration of the Soviet Union. 'We've made it clear to the Americans that they are responsible for this problem. They established training camps and created Mujahideen to disintegrate Russia. When it collapsed, they left and we fell prey to the menace of terrorism,' he lamented while addressing a news conference at Multan Airport."

News Story: "U.S. Rejects Reports Of Foreigners Being Trained At Sihala" "Daily Times" (10/21)

"The U.S. Embassy on Tuesday expressed disappointment at media reports claiming the Sihala law enforcement training facility was being used to train foreigners on Pakistani soil." (story also covered in: The News, Dawn, Jang)

News Story: "Iran Mounts Pressure On Pakistan Over Bombing" "Dawn" (10/21)

"Pakistan on Tuesday blamed a massive suicide attack in Iran on forces wanting to spoil relations between the countries and denied knowing the whereabouts of the alleged mastermind wanted by Tehran. The comments from Pakistan's foreign ministry came as Iran stepped up pressure on Islamabad, charging that the group accused of launching Sunday's attack is based in Pakistan and urging its ally to confront the rebels."

Editorial: "The Evil In Our Midst," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (10/21)

"Depressingly, though perhaps not unsurprisingly given the beliefs of militant extremists, an educational institution has been targeted by two suicide bombers in Islamabad. That the institution happened

to be the International Islamic University may be doubly shocking to some. But the dastardly attack against innocent students on Tuesday is indicative of the fact that the fight for the future of Pakistan does not just pit the 'godless' against the 'true believers'; it is actually a war by a radical minority in society that is bent on imposing its millenarian ideals on the rest of the population, including those trying to educate themselves about Islam in a modern environment."

Editorial: "Death On Campus," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (10/21)

"The blasts at the Islamic University, as others in the last fourteen days, are the clearest indicator yet that those who would cull our civilian population are heartless and godless, utterly unworthy of the support of any right-minded person - no matter the perceived injustices that the murderers of children are claiming to be battling to right. The greater tragedy is that we can expect more of the same."

Editorial: "Army's Message To The Mehsud," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (10/21)

"The Army Chief's reference to 'foreigners' is a carefully deployed appeal to the code of Pashtun honor which allows safe haven to the suppliant but bans all hostile acts from him. If a tribe allows the supplicants to go out and kill fellow-Pashtuns, it is a serious violation of Pashtun Wali. Not only is the Pashtun-based government of the NWFP opposed to the presence of these foreigners; even the non-Mehsud tribes of South Waziristan have taken up arms in the past to oust them from their territory.... The Pakistan Army is in South Waziristan with national support, no matter how tough the job pans out to be. As Clausewitz said, no war worth the name ever runs according to plan. As for international support, the entire world is applauding the operation and wants it to succeed. For Pakistan, it is the second crucial step after Malakand to re-establish the dwindling writ of the state."

Editorial: "Conspiracy To Pitch Pakistan Army Against Religious Forces," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (10/21)

"It seems that by removing the check-posts on the Pak-Afghan border, the U.S. wants to impose the Afghan war on Pakistan. This unguarded and porous border would provide carte-blanche to Afghan Taliban to penetrate into the Pakistani territory, and fight against our forces in Waziristan. It is the longstanding desire of Washington and its allies to force the Pakistan army, the ISI and the religious forces into a fratricidal war. Now the military operation in Waziristan has provided these foreign powers a pretext to fulfill their nefarious designs against Pakistan."

Editorial: "Waziristan Operation: NATO Forces Should Also Fulfill Responsibilities," an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (10/21)

"Now when the Pakistan army has launched operation in Waziristan, the removal of NATO check-posts on the Pak-Afghan border will provide the terrorists an opportunity to sneak into Pakistan, and perpetrate terror incidents here. The main purpose of these check-posts was to check the in and out movement of the terrorists across this porous border. In the past, these foreign elements had been involved in terror incidents in Pakistan in which hundreds of the innocent people were killed and injured. Under these circumstances, the removal of these check-posts will be seen as giving terrorists a permit to infiltrate into Pakistan unchecked, and such a policy would be considered a signal of non-cooperation from the United States and NATO forces."

Editorial: "U.S. Officials' Arrival: Satanic Strategy Of Besieging Pakistan," an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (10/21)

"By embroiling Pakistan in domestic unrest and battles, the U.S. is striving to attain its own objectives. Pakistan-Iran relations have chilled after the suicide attack in Iran. Pakistan is the target of the game Jandullah is playing under U.S. patronage. By surrounding

Pakistan from outside, Pakistan is being weakened internally so that the path can be paved for control over its nuclear assets. Our political and military leadership should make no mistake in understanding U.S. designs. Our leadership should avoid being dragged into the quagmire U.S. is stuck in for the last eight years, and for which Britain and Soviet Union paid a heavy price years ago."

Opinion: "Pakistan: Trapped In The U.S. Game Plan" an op-ed by Shireen Mazari" in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (10/21)

"There is a dangerous pattern connecting the events happening in and around Pakistan today. Unless we can see this larger picture, we will be overwhelmed by the fallout and our detractors like the U.S. will have fulfilled their agenda for this nuclear capable country. The roots of this U.S. agenda go back to Musharraf's hasty embrace of the U.S. 'war on terror.' What was not realized at the time was the psychological trauma the U.S. had undergone as a result of 9/11, which had led to the bolstering of the already suspicion-tinted view the U.S. had of the Muslim world. Of course, some pliant Muslim leaders were reluctantly embraced as 'allies,' but always on a tight leash, but by and large nationalist Muslim leaders and their nations were something the Americans never felt comfortable with. If these nations were also militarily or economically strong, the U.S. felt even more uncomfortable.... Only one last phase of the U.S. agenda has to be operationalize, but that will be the toughest. This is to push the country into a civil war-like situation by threatening to target Quetta and southern Punjab as well as Muridke. First there was pressure on the army to move into Swat; now it is SWA and the new mantra of moving the army into southern Punjab has already begun! Overstretch the military and create civil-military fissures so as to totally destabilize the country. When there is a state of total chaos, the U.S. can pressure the UNSC into allowing it to take over Pakistan's nuclear assets - what will euphemistically be termed 'under international control.' But the big problem now is that too many in the corridors of power in Pakistan are beginning to see the light while the people have also woken up to the lethal American agenda for Pakistan. Unless we can see the whole U.S. game plan, and connect all the dots we will continue to fall prey to this

destructive design."

KERRY-LUGAR BILL

Editorial: "Between The Lines," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (10/21)

"Senator John Kerry has described the meetings he held during a brief visit to Pakistan to 'clarify' the concerns raised over conditionalities attached to the \$7.5 billion aid to be extended under the Kerry-Lugar Bill as 'positive.' It is significant that the U.S. lawmaker focused the time he had available on meeting those who had most reservations about the bill - Mian Nawaz Sharif and General Ashfaq Pervaiz Kayani. But reading between the lines, it seems clear that Mr. Kerry found the going tough."

Editorial: "Unconvincing Kerry," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (10/21)

"The objectionable clauses have been discussed threadbare and its implications are no longer hidden. And it is quite obvious that the explanatory statement could not dilute the Act, notwithstanding what its apologists might say. The Kerry-Lugar Act has now become an Act of Congress. In the eyes of the law, which only matters when it comes to the crunch, the explanation does not dilute the constrictive nature of its conditionalities.... If Pakistan is in dire straits economically and needs help, the U.S. cannot expect to win its life-and-death struggle against terrorism without Pakistan's support. Our leadership must grasp this point and exploit it to the fullest advantage of the country. Senator Kerry must not go back with the impression that he has been able to win us over. The U.S. should know that it has lost many more friends in the process of inflicting this iniquitous law."

Editorial: "Failed Visit Of John Kerry: Redemption From U.S. Is Better," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (10/21)

"The Pakistani leadership has told Senator Kerry in plain terms during his recent visit that Washington should address all the reservations of the Pakistani nation on the Kerry-Lugar Bill. The government should clearly tell the Americans that Pakistan will not accept a single penny in aid with conditionalities."

Editorial: "Senator Kerry's Meetings With The Pakistani Leaders," an editorial in the liberal national Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25000) (10/21)

"There is a need to remove the reservations of all the opposition parties [regarding the Kerry-Lugar bill] so that there is harmony at the national level and Pakistan is able to get the fiscal help it needs to overcome the current economic crisis and stand on its feet. The government should issue a clarification on the clauses the opposition finds questionable so that the nation is able to understand the real situation and there can be a final decision on the bill."

Editorial: "Reservations On Kerry-Lugar Bill, And The Need To Stop Afghan Infiltration," an editorial in the Lahore-based Urdu daily "Waqt" (cir.5000) (10/21)

"The international community should play its role in reconstructing the areas effected by the ongoing war against terrorism and Pakistani forces should be provided the weapons they need to conduct the operations. General Petraeus should pay urgent attention to these issues. The U.S. should also take note of the Pakistani nation's sentiments on the Kerry-Lugar and take effective measures to allay these apprehensions."

Opinion: "Politics Of Kerry-Lugar Bill," an op-ed by Ijaz Hussain in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (10/21)

"Why is the government so keen to support the Kerry-Lugar Bill? There are two explanations for it. First, it is in dire need of money to run the affairs of the state and thinks that once the funds start flowing, it would help strengthen its hold on power, though

there are some in its ranks who may be thinking of riding a new gravy train. Second, through the Kerry-Lugar Bill, it wants to put the army under leash because this is the only source from where it feels a threat to its political longevity. It does not care if it has to join hands with the devil or the Americans (aren't two the same?) for the purpose."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: "Gilani Assures Neutrality: Nisar" "The Nation" (10/21)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani has assured the PML-N Chief Nawaz Sharif that the federal government would remain neutral in the formation of the Azad Jammu Kashmir government. The Opposition Leader in the National Assembly and the PML-N central leader, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, told a press conference here in the Punjab House on Tuesday."

News Story: "Let's Have NRO Debate In The Open, Say Panel Members" "The News" (10/21)

"The government was in for a rude shock on the NRO issue when on Tuesday 15 out of the 17-member National Assembly standing committee on law and justice engaged with the controversial piece of legislation almost scuttled a government move, which want the next committee meeting on October 26 to be held in-camera to avoid any embarrassing coverage of the issue. Unbelievable as it may seem, but this group, demanding media glasnost, also includes seven members out of the total nine-member PPP squad in the committee."

News Story: "Election Commission Agrees To Entertain Punjab Government's Request For By-Polls Delay" "The News" (10/21)

"The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday submitted a detailed reply to a division bench of the Lahore High Court (LHC), comprising Justice Umar Ata Bandial and Justice Ijazul Ahsan, agreeing to entertain any request of the provincial government or any other stakeholder for the deferment of by-polls before issuing any new schedule."

ECON/BUSINESS

News Story: "Pak, U.S. Energy Dialogue Begins On 23rd" "Daily Times" (10/21)

"Talks between Pakistan and the US are scheduled for October 23-24 to identify areas for improved bilateral cooperation as part of efforts to overcome an energy crisis in the country, official sources told daily Times on Tuesday."

News Story: "Government's Inaction On Oil Prices Troubles Supreme Court" "Dawn" (10/21)

"The Supreme Court expressed surprise on Tuesday that the government had paid no attention to a suggestion made by the Rana Bhagwandas Commission about devising a new pricing mechanism for petroleum products and wondered why prices of locally produced CNG, LPG, petrol and diesel were linked to the international market."

News Story: "Ban On Inter-Provincial Sugar Trade Likely To Go" "The Nation" (10/21)

"Punjab government has finally decided to remove restrictions on sugar trade between Punjab and NWFP, sources revealed on Tuesday. The government of Punjab has taken this decision due to much hue and cry of masses and traders of both provinces against the controversial ban."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: "Karzai, Abdullah To Contest Run-Off On November 7" "Dawn" (10/21)

"Afghanistan's election commission Tuesday ordered a November 7 runoff in the disputed presidential poll after a fraud investigation dropped incumbent Hamid Karzai's votes below 50 per cent of the total. Karzai accepted the finding and agreed to a second round

vote. The announcement came two months to the day after the first round vote and follows weeks of political uncertainty at a time when Taliban strength is growing."

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(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson